

## Minutes of the Curriculum and Achievement Committee held 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018 at Warblington School

### Attending:

NB – Nicholas Bennett (Chair, Co-opted Governor)  
CB – Claire Blundell (Co-opted Governor) \*  
DD – David Dowland (Co-opted Governor) \*\*  
CGW – Carolyn Galmoye-Webster  
(Parent Governor)  
RP – Robert Page (Co-opted Governor)  
JV – Julia Vincent (Headteacher) \*

### Apologies:

LW – Louise Warren (Parent Governor)

### In attendance:

JF – Jane Fletcher (Assistant Headteacher) \*  
ER – Esther Richards  
(Curriculum leader – English) \*  
MT – Mike Turner (LA Clerk)

\* member of staff

\*\* arriving late

Quorum is 4 Governors (half appointed Governors, rounded up)

Meeting opened at 5:21 pm. Meeting was quorate.

### CA2.1 Welcome and apologies.

NB advised apologies had been received from LW and that DD had advised he would arrive a few minutes late. He introduced CGW, and those present introduced themselves.

### CA2.2 Declaration of pecuniary interests.

No new declarations were made; this being her first meeting since appointment as a Parent Governor, this requirement was explained and a declaration (stating no interests) was signed.

### CA2.3 Previous meeting minutes.

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 were proposed by NB, seconded by RP and agreed without formal vote.

### CA2.4 Matters arising and action report.

It was noted all items were complete. No other matters were brought to the meeting,

### CA2.5 Governor matters.

- a. Correspondence. No correspondence was brought to the meeting.
- b. Governor visits (to include SIP observations). There was no feedback pertinent to this Committee.

### CA2.6 Data/subject Reviews.

- a. LLP Rreport. The visit report (visit date 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017) had been circulated. JV

advised that consequential to the visit, presentation of (pupil) work had been considered by senior leaders and this aspect of the Report discussed with all staff. Governors also noted the positive comments around the provision and outcomes of vulnerable groups.

- b. In year data. This had been largely considered at the presentation from Ed Whiffen to the FGB (24<sup>th</sup> January 2018). The latest data for disadvantaged/vulnerable pupils within Year 7 and Year 8 pupils shows improvement since last year; staff are encouraged rather than directly seeking to “close the gap”, to consider every pupil individually which will lead to individual improvements which then impact the gap closure.

*COMMENT: There is a large number of pupils (well above the national average) within the SEN, pupil premium or other disadvantaged cohorts. Our role is to ensure they are properly monitored and supported.*

*COMMENT: There is a significant amount of work required which, as a new Governor, my initial impression is well understood and carefully implemented and supported.*

- c. Annual SEN statement. JV confirmed this had been updated to the school website; the content was affirmed by those present.

*QUESTION: The role of the SENCo is vital to this process; how are their hours agreed – and reviewed? ANSWER (JV): The role of SENCo is vital to the effective running of any school, but with the increased needs of our pupils, yes it is more so for this school. Their hours and responsibilities are reviewed regularly with other school leaders, but a full time position based in our Gateway Room is being advertised with a start date in September.*

- d. Dashboard. JV advised pupil attendance now stands as 93.7% (slightly improved from the previously reported 93.6%). Given this is below the national threshold/target of 95%, this remains a focus for school leaders.

*QUESTION: I note that Year 9 attendance is lower than the other year groups – is there a reason for this apparent difference? ANSWER (CB): As year group leader I would observe that within the cohort there are two elective non-attenders who are now off-role, but impacted the data until this was formalised. If they are removed from the data we are in line with other year groups.*

*QUESTION: Are there any long term issues? ANSWER (JV): Nationally persistent absence is now regarded as below 90%, previously this was 85%; this makes comparisons with previous years impossible. This approximately equates to one week per Term so “casual non attendance” or non-attendance on medical grounds can pull pupils into this category. COMMENT (JF): We carefully monitor attendance with individual pupils supported (for example by their tutors). COMMENT (CB): This is within a more positive atmosphere to nurture improved attendance.*

*QUESTION: I appreciate there is a different measure, but how does overall attendance compare with previous years? ANSWER (JV): It is clearly a greater issue this year.*

*COMMENT: There is lots of strong, ongoing work by focussed staff. This must continue.*

In listening to this issue and comments it was agreed a review of attendance statistics over time should be on the next agenda.

CA2.7 Headteachers report. (This together with associated papers had been circulated).

JV guided Governors through her report:

- a. MFL Review. JV confirmed the review affirmed the good lessons and the agreed action point focus for KS3 pupils is their listening and speaking skills. Governors noted the trend of rising results, but that this still remains below national expectations.

*COMMENT: It is also of note that the school still encourages all pupils that undertake MFL, to also sit their GCSE. If we encouraged some pupils to change options (or not sit the GCSE) we might improve the percentage but I am pleased that this school is inclusive and wants to encourage all pupils to have the opportunity to succeed.*

*QUESTION: I accept there is an improving trend but can you accelerate the rate of increase so we move towards national averages more swiftly? ANSWER (JV): We continue to work with staff and receive support from HIAS and our other advisors. French is already accelerating progress, but we need to spread this across the whole MFL curriculum.*

*COMMENT: Student voice indicates pupils make MFL is a lower priority for revision. In noting this comment it was also observed MFL seems to be a low priority within an element of the local community and this impacts on their perceived priorities.*

- b. Year 9 review.

*QUESTION: Pupils and their parents mention the possibility of economics, business studies or psychology. Is there scope to include these subjects? ANSWER (JV): Increased subject options become hard for smaller schools – as we recently discovered with computer studies, it is hard when a teacher moves on to find a replacement able to cover these less popular courses on a part-time contract only, or able to teach them and other subjects. Another option could be for our pupils to attend another (local) school for specific subject(s), but again from my previous experience, pupil found this very difficult.*

*QUESTION: So what would you say is the minimum number of pupils to make a subject a valid option? ANSWER (JF): Typically the smallest effective group would be 15-20 pupils, more accurate numbers depend on the actual cohort. When looking at introducing new subjects a smaller number of pupils could be possible as a subject trial – this has been effective in the past (for example – drama). ANSWER (JV): Sadly it is also necessary to track financial viability – this also sits at around 15 pupils. However we do try to be flexible to try to keep breadth within our curriculum.*

Governors noted the need to allow flexibility to allow for changes in pupil subject options and to help meet the needs of pupils transitioning into the school during KS3/4.

- c. Pupil Premium and Music. This financial review had been circulated, advising she had a conflict of interest, CB asked to speak then withdraw.

CB advised that when she heard of this significant financial draw on pupil premium funding, as a music teacher she queried some of the quoted costs. She observed that, unlike other subjects, 30% of the music exam attainment comes from performance, typically three of four songs or pieces across several events. However this means pupils need training in a variety of instruments around their abilities. Although individual tuition is always preferable, vocals or some instruments can be taught within small groups, but others (for example drums or piano/keyboard) are not easily taught or progressed in a group setting.

CB also observed that within any subject there are pupils who excel; this is no different for music. While funding must be monitored she asked Governors to consider supporting pupils learning two different instruments to higher levels.

Governors noted her comments and after discussion requested she meet with other staff to revisit the support costs for pupils using pupil premium funding. They also agreed that the school should, in principle, continue to use pupil premium funding to meet the costs of lessons for eligible pupils, but that this should be limited to shared lessons where practical.

Furthermore the music teacher (or Faculty Leader: Creative & Performing Arts) can request additional funding in exceptional cases for pupils taking two music exams at higher levels; approval for such funding being within the gift of the Headteacher.

A summary of this recommendation Governors asked JV to take this matter to the Finance and Site meeting scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

(POST MEETING NOTE – CB MET WITH THE FINANCE MANAGER AND THE REQUESTED INFORMATION PREPARED FOR THE FINANCE AND SITE COMMITTEE MEETING ON 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018).

#### CA2.8 Curriculum Update – English.

ER led Governors through her circulated update.

Firstly she explained that there are three aspects to the English language exam, two written tests and a teacher assessment on spoken language. Strangely this latter aspect is required but has no impact on the overall pupil achievement. Pupil must ensure SPAG is carefully observed within all their answers (this accounts for 16 of the 80 available points on each test). She added that the second paper requires pupils to read a text and then respond to questions. However the text is set at a reading age of 16-18, making it additionally difficult for some pupils to understand and therefore respond to questions. Turning to the English literature exam papers she explained the first paper cover the chosen Shakespeare text as well as the chosen 19<sup>th</sup> Century text meaning the whole paper is based on texts some pupils find hard to read. Another issue is that in the second paper the poetry is not known until the exam, which is another trigger for some pupils.

ER led Governors through the most recent pupil data, observing that for pupils to attain “mastery” they have to be master of all aspects – punctuation and the use of paragraphs for example, something that is difficult compared to other subjects (for example in maths a pupil might be a “master” in fractions but not in algebra). As such the “mastery” numbers for English are lower

*COMMENT: The English Department is benefitting from stable staffing – relationships are made with pupils which helps them learn.*

#### CA2.9 Policies.

- a. Educational Visits.
- b. Inclusion Policy.
- c. Provider Access.

These policies were all noted; with no delegated authority they all recommended for approval at the next FGB (22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018).

#### CA2.10 Matters from the Chair.

No other matters were brought to the meeting.

#### CA2.11 Next meeting matters.

Noting the cycle of business was adapted to include a curriculum report for maths. Other than matters referred to in the meeting, no new items were proposed.

Dates were agreed as

- Pay – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 at 5:00 pm
- FGB – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018 at 5:15pm

C&A dates for 2017-18 meetings:

- 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018 at 5:15 pm

The meeting closed at 6:57 pm.

**ACTIONS:**

Re CA2.6d – Attendance.      Review of pupil attendance over time to be on the next meeting agenda.

Re CA2.7c – Music funding.      CB to meet with staff to prepare a report for the Finance and Site Committee to review.

Re CA2.9 - Policies.              To be taken to FGB for agreement.

Signed .....  
Chair of Committee

Date .....